

EARTH OBSERVATION SYMPOSIUM (B1)
Biodiversity (6)

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SPACE TECHNOLOGY AND APPLICATIONS FOR MONITORING AND PROTECTING
BIODIVERSITY AND ECOSYSTEMS: A NEW THEMATIC PRIORITY OF THE UNITED NATIONS
PROGRAMME ON SPACE APPLICATIONS**Abstract**

The United Nations Programme on Space Applications was established in 1971 to assist Member States with building capacity in using space science, technology and their applications in support of sustainable economic, social and environmental development. The Programme is implemented by the United Nations Office for Outer Space Affairs. In 2014, as a result of discussions with researchers at the United Nations University - Institute for the Advanced Study of Sustainability, a new thematic priority on the theme “monitoring and protecting biodiversity and ecosystems” was added to the Programme. The new thematic priority was subsequently endorsed by the United Nations Committee on Peaceful Uses of Outer Space and the United Nations General Assembly . It is closely linked to and aligned with relevant goals set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, in particular Sustainable Development Goal 15 “Life on Land – to protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss”. As a first activity the Office for Outer Space Affairs, in cooperation with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources of the Government of Kenya and with the support of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) organized the “United Nations/Kenya Conference on Space Technologies and Applications for Wildlife Management and Protecting Biodiversity”, held at UNEP headquarters in Nairobi, Kenya, in June 2016. The Conference aimed to bring together stakeholders involved in biodiversity and wildlife management, representatives of space industry, governmental and non-governmental organizations and expert communities, space applications and geo-spatial experts and the users of such applications, as well as park rangers and wildlife managers, to share their user requirements and experience and to present existing and planned space technologies and applications. The present paper reports on the new thematic priority of the Programme on Space Applications, on the observations and recommendations of the United Nations/Kenya Conference and on future activities to promote the use of space applications for monitoring and protecting biodiversity and ecosystems.